21. Assassination Inquiries

Q. Mr. President, in view of the Congressional report on the C.I.A. and the recent testimony about F.B.I. activities and continuing doubt in the country, don't you think it would be in the national interest to reopen the assassination investigation of President Kennedy, and now Martin Luther King as well?

A. I, of course, served on the Warren Commission. And I know a good deal about the hearings and the committee report, obviously. There are some new developments—not evidence—but new developments that, according to one of our best staff members who's kept up to date on it more than I, that he thinks just to lay those charges aside that a new investigation ought to be undertaken.

He at the same time said that no new evidence has come up. If those particular developments could be fully investigated without reopening the whole matter that took us 10 months to conclude, I think some responsible group or organization ought to do so.

But not to reopen all of the other aspects because I think they were thoroughly covered by the Warren Commission.

Q. Mr. President, are you prepared then to take that step on the part of the Administration, to appoint a task force in the Justice Department, say, to look into the new developments and to report on those as well? Or would you rather have it done by an independent organization?

A. I think in light of my former membership on the Warren Commission, it might be better done by someone other than I appoint. NY TIMES